

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1 has been amended and claim 2 has been canceled as follows:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for producing modified gum arabic, the method comprising the step of heating gum arabic ~~under dry conditions~~ in such a manner that the loss-on-drying is not more than 3%, or heating gum arabic in dry state that the loss-on-drying is not more than 3%.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (original): The method for producing modified gum arabic according to Claim 1, wherein gum arabic is heated at a temperature of 90°C to 180°C.

Claim 4 (original): The method for producing modified gum arabic according to Claim 1, the method comprising the steps of drying gum arabic until the loss-on-drying is not more than 3%, and subsequently heating the dried gum arabic.

Claim 5 (original): The method for producing modified gum arabic according to Claim 1,

wherein gum arabic is heated at reduced pressure.

Claim 6 (original): The method for producing modified gum arabic according to Claim 1, wherein gum arabic to be heat treated has an average particle diameter of not more than 1.5 mm.

Claim 7 (original): The method for producing modified gum arabic according to Claim 1, wherein gum arabic to be heat treated is spray-dried.

Claim 8 (original): The method for producing modified gum arabic according to Claim 1, wherein discoloration is suppressed and emulsifying ability is increased in the modified gum arabic.

Claim 9 (original): Modified gum arabic, which is obtained by a production method of Claim 1.

Claim 10 (original): An emulsifier, comprising as an active ingredient a modified gum arabic obtained by a production method of Claim 1.

Claim 11 (original): A method for preparing an emulsion, wherein a modified gum arabic obtained by a production method of Claim 1 is used as an emulsifier.

Claim 12 (original): The method for preparing an emulsion according to Claim 11, wherein

the emulsion is an O/W or W/O/W emulsion which contains, as a dispersoid, at least one hydrophobic substance selected from the group consisting of essential oils, oil-based flavorings, oil-based colorants, fat-soluble vitamins, polyunsaturated fatty acids, animal oils, vegetable oils, sucrose acetate isobutyrate, and medium-chain triglycerides.

Claim 13 (original): An emulsion, which is prepared by a preparation method of Claim 11.

Claim 14 (original): The emulsion according to Claim 13, which is an O/W or W/O/W emulsion containing, as a dispersoid, at least one hydrophobic substance selected from the group consisting of essential oils, oil-based flavorings, oil-based colorants, fat-soluble vitamins, polyunsaturated fatty acids, animal oils, vegetable oils, sucrose acetate isobutyrate, and medium-chain triglycerides.

Claim 15 (original): Use of a modified gum arabic obtained by a production method of Claim 1 for preparing an emulsifier.

Claim 16 (original): Use of a modified gum arabic obtained by a production method of Claim 1 for preparing an emulsion.